A

SERMON

Preached in

St. *Peter's* Church at *Colchester* in *Essex*, *June* the 21th 1698.

At the

FUNERAL

OF

Mrs. Eliz. Naggs.

By Tho. Knaggs, *M. A. and Chaplain to the Right Honourable* Ford *Earl of* Tankerville.

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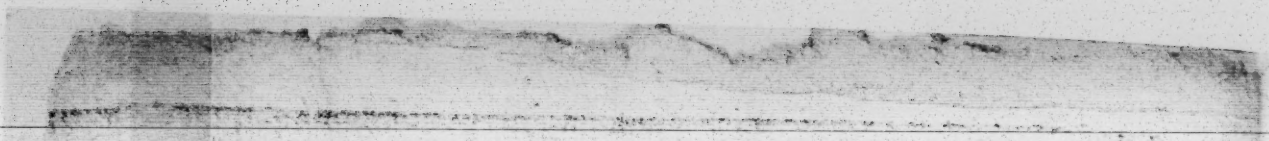

TO

Mr. Stephen Naggs

OF

COLCHESTER

Sir,

THIS Sermon, *which was never design'd for the Press, is, through vehement Importunity of Friends, extorted from me, and made Publick. The most proper Person to give it Patronage is your Self, as being Husband of the so much Lamented Deceased, and therefore, I begg you will please to accept of it.*

Great Attention was given to it from those who heard it from the Pulpit; and if the Publication does Imprint it in the Hearts of others who were Absent, it will be matter of Joy and Comfort to me. I am,

Your most Affectionate Friend,
and Servant,

Tho. Knaggs.

Prov.

PROV. Cap. XXVII. ver. i.

Boaſt not thy ſelf of to Morrow, for thou know'ſt not what a Day may bring forth.

WHen we reflect upon the Uncertainty of Man's Life, and call to mind the bodily Infirmities and Diſeaſes which we are ſubject to in this ſtate of Frailty and Mortality: When we look upon the dayly decays of natural Strength within our ſelves; as alſo the ſhort Life and ſuddain Death of many others: And laſtly, when we conſider how the Breath of many Men is taken from them by an accident, we have all the reaſon in the World to believe, that there is not any piece of Folly which Men can be more guilty of than a Preſumption of long Life. Almighty *God*, in whoſe Power alone, and at whoſe Pleaſure are the times and the ſeaſons, hath pronounced an unalterable Sentence, *We muſt all Die*, and hath prepar'd the Grave as an Houſe *appointed* for all Living. The Experience of former Ages hath ſuffitiently confirm'd this great Truth, ſo that we deſerve to be poſted for down-right Fools and Madmen, if we do not firmly believe we muſt follow in our Turn, and be laid in the Duſt as thoſe that are gone before.

And

And, as it is a moſt certain truth, that the ſtroak of Death is unavoidable; ſo their is nothing ſo Uncertain as the time when it will ſeize upon us. *Watch and Pray* * *for ye know not when the time ſhall be.* The hour of our Death is known to no Man. The Angels which are in Heaven are ignorant of our Dying-day. The Son of *God*, as to his humane Nature, is a ſtranger to that time when the Sun of our Life ſhall ſet and go down: 'Tis the peculiar Prerogative of the Father, of God himſelf, who knows all things to know when our *Souls* muſt *go* to Him that *gave* them, and therefore it highly concerns us all to be provided for Death, leſt coming ſuddainly upon us, it find us in our Sins, and ſend us away to Judgement to anſwer for them. No queſtion but many Souls, even this Morning, have paſs'd the Pangs and Agonies of Death, and made their Appearance before a Righteous and Juſt Judge. What would become of us, had ours gone along with them? Are our Accounts even? Are all things between God and our Souls right and in order? Is our Peace made with Heaven? Or, are we Proof againſt the Accuſations of Satan aud our own Conſciences? Suppoſe we ſhould this night hear the Cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*, are we ready to enter into the Wedding chamber; And, why may not our Bed this Night be our Grave, our Sleep our Death, and our next Uprising our Summons to a terrible Tribunal? Whilſt we ſlept ſecurely in our Beds, have we not the next Morning heard of the ſuddain and untimely Death of many Men? And what are we better than they? When we go forth into the World in the Morning, can we promiſe our ſelves we ſhall run into no danger that day? Do we not often meet with Company that gives us Diſturbance? Do we not often meet with Buſineſs that inſnares us? Are not we expos'd to many temptations in a wide world,

Mark 13. 33.

and

and may not variety of Accidents befal us as well as they have done others? What are we then, that we ſhould *boaſt of to Morrow*, whereas *we know not what a day may bring forth?*

In diſcourſing of which Words, I ſhall

I. Shew the Folly and Danger of Mens promiſing to themſelves Long-life.

II. I ſhall conſider the Frailty of our Lives; and, in the conſideration thereof, let you ſee, That the Uncertainty of our Lives ſhould make us humble in the midſt of Plenty and Proſperity.

III. That the Preſumption of having many Years yet to come, may juſtly provoke *God* to blaſt ſuch a Preſumption with a ſuddain Diſappointment: And,

Laſtly, I ſhall draw Two Inferences from the whole, and ſo conclude.

I begin with the firſt of theſe, *viz. To ſhew the Folly and danger of Men promiſing to themſelves Long-life.*

It hath always been the Cuſtome of the Spirit of *God* in the Scriptures to compare the Life of Man to thoſe things that are of little Certainty, and no Continuance. *What is you Life? It is even a Vapour that appears for a little time and then vaniſheth away.* This is the ſhort, fickle, uncertain Nature of Man's Life. *Are not his days like the days of an Hireling*, ſaid *Job*, Which according to the Word of *God* himſelf is but Three Years. His time is parallell'd with *Months*, with *Days*, with a *Watch in the Night*; nay, even with *Nothing*. Man's time is ſaid to paſs more haſtily than a *Weaver's Shuttle*, or a *Ship* that paſſeth over the Waves of the Water; or a *Bird* that flies through the Air, or an Arrow ſhot out of a Bow. Our days are gone as a Dream, they fly away as

Jam. 4. 13. Cap. 7. 1. *Iſay.* 16. 14. *Pſal.* 90. 4. 39. *Wiſd.* 5.

Job 14. as a ſhadow, they vaniſh as a Word in the Air, and periſh as a Thought. Seeing *Man that is born of a Woman* has but a ſhort time to live, What a folly is it to dote upon the glittering Vanities and the gilded Thorns of this ſublunary World, and to preſume upon a long and pleaſant Enjoyment of Earthly Comforts and Delights? Remember the Rich Fool in the Parable, whoſe Soul was
Luke 12. requir'd that very night after he had reſolv'd to lay up Wealth for many Years, whereon he might Eat, Drink, and be merry. There cannot be a greater Vanity than for Men to extend their Ends and Deſigns far: If they will needs turn Projectors, let it appear by *laying up a good*
1 Tim. 6. *Foundation againſt the time to come*, againſt the day of Ne-
18. ceſſity, and by ſetting their Affections on things above. *Boaſt not of to Morrow.* Death ſends not always a Warning to us, as it did to good King *Hezekiah*, *Set thy Houſe in order for thou muſt Die.* No, it ſurprizeth the Young, as well as takes away the old, for with Death there is no reſpect of Perſons. *Job*'s Children dream'd little of dying ſo ſuddainly, when they were ſolaceing and delighting themſelves in their Feaſts and Jollities. And the rich Fool in the Goſpel did the like, when he was rejoycing in his preſent Fortune, and the Charms of his own Heart. When *David* hugg'd himſelf in his Security, by the great Number of his People, *God* quickly followed his Pride with Peſtilence, and makes them decreaſe Seventy Thouſand, 1 *Chron.* 21. 14. Whilſt *Nebuchadnezzar* was vaunting and magnifying himſelf, *Is not this great Babylon that I have Built, for the might of my Power, and for the honour of my Majeſty?* While the Word was in his Mouth, there fell a voice from Heaven, ſaying, *The Kingdom is departed from thee*; and he was turn'd to eat Graſs as Oxen, *Dan.* 4. 30. If the wicked Servant begin to *eat and drink with the Drunken*, the Lord will

will come unexpectedly, *and cut him asunder, and appoint his Portion with the Hypocrites*, Matth. 24. 49. Whilst the People, before the Flood, were Eating, Drinking, Marrying, and giving in Marriage, the Deluge came and destroy'd them all. And *in the days of* Lot *they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they Builded, but the same day that* Lot *went out of* Sodome, *it rained Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all.* They were surpriz'd in the midst of their Prosperity, and all the hopes of the one, as well as the Pleasures of the other, were cut *off by an unexpected Stroak. Man knows not his time, as the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in a snare, so are the Sons of Men snar'd in an evil time, when it falls suddainly upon them.* I would to *God* I could awaken Men out of their folly, upon a Presumption of a Long-life, and convince them of the danger of it by seeing others suddainly snatch'd away in the prime of their Years, in their full Strength and youthful Vigour. Who next among us shall fall into the hands of Death we know not: 'tis sure we must all at one time or other: You the Hearers, and I the Preacher are concluded under the necessity of Dying, and how soon the Grave shall shut its Mouth upon us we cannot find out, or make any Discovery. We see that Young-men die as well old, rich as well as poor, wise as well as fools, and good Men and Women, as well as bad. Did Death feed only on those that would not be miss'd among us? Were trivial *Souls* the subject only of Deaths Triumph? Those unuseful Burthens of the Earth, who have no Profession but that of the *Athenians* to hear and tell News? Were such Persons only who go from place to place and *Talk* out their time to lie down in the Dust, and be shut up in a dark and silent Grave? Did Death only remove such unprofitable things as these, who like the fruitless

Vulgares animas, Lucan.

Frustra pericura cadavera.

Acts 17. 21.

tree in the Goſpel only *comber* the Earth? It would be well. But the beſt of Men, and the deareſt Servants of *God* muſt be laid in the Earth, and take up their Lodging in the ſame Duſt with the greateſt Sinners. *Alexander* the Great, having found *Diogenes* in a Charnel-houſe, ask'd him, What he was doing? To whom he made this Anſwer, *I am in ſearch of thy Father* Philip's *Bones, but I find all is loſt labour; for in ſo great A Number, one differs not from Another.* Diſtinctions are all buried in the Grave. We are all alike in the Duſt, and the Skull of the Wiſe, as well as that of the Fool ſhall be an Habitation for VVorms to dwell in. Death makes no diſtinction, it's Aſſaults are Univerſal, and it's Fury will not be ſtopp'd till it has over-whelm'd and cover'd the Univerſe, All Mankind lies under a conſtraint of ſaying to Corruption, *Thou art my Father, and to the Worm thou art my Mother and my Siſter.* *Where is the houſe of the Prince?* was a Queſtion ask'd in *Job*'s time, and the Anſwer is this, *He ſhall be brought to the Grave, and ſhall remain in the Tomb, the Clods of the Vally ſhall be ſweet upon him, and every Man ſhall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him.* Death haſtens apace upon us. We know not what a day may bring forth: And therefore, to convince you what folly and danger there is in *boaſting of to morrow*, I here wiſh you to take theſe Words along with you, *When thou riſeſt in the morning make it a Queſtion, Whether thou ſhalt live till night, and when thou goeſt to Bed, be doubtful whether thou ſhalt live to ſee the next morning dawn upon thee.* St. *Auguſtin*, ſpeaking to a Man, who put off his Converſion from day to day, replies thus upon him, *Thou ſay'ſt to morrow thou wilt be converted, and to morrow ſhall be the End of thy Sins: But how knoweſt thou, but that thou may'ſt be a Dead Corps before to morrow? Has* God *made thee a promiſe, thou ſhalt live and ſee to morrow?*

Job 17. 14.

21. 28, 32.

row? *Be not deceived*, God *has not made any such Promiſe to any man.* 'Tis a dangerous thing for a Man to talk of leaving his Sins to morrow, becauſe Death may ſurprize him to day, and ſend him unprovided to Judgement. Are we alive to day? let us make our Peace with *God*, for we know not but we may be dead to morrow? Are we here to day in our Sins, we know not but to morrow may cloſe our Eyes and bring us before the Judgement Seat of a Righteous Judge, to anſwer for every one of them? Are we call'd to work in the Vineyard at the Sixth Hour, come quickly, for we may not live to ſee the Seventh? 'Twas a diſmal concluſion which ſome antient Heathens made; becauſe they might poſſibly die to morrow, therefore it was their beſt courſe to do nothing but debauch to day. And too many Chriſtians reaſon thus Atheiſtically with themſelves, Our Life is ſhort, come on therefore, let us enjoy the things that are preſent. But for a Man to have his Eyes clos'd here, and immediately open'd again in Judgment, where he ſhall ſee all the actions of his Life ſpread before him, and as really preſented to his view, as thoſe things which are now moſt freſh in Memory; Oh the Conſternation the Soul will then be in! Good *God!* was ever any Folly like that of putting the day of Death far from us? Did ever Men run into ſuch danger as they who preſume they have yet time enough upon their hand to come in and amend? Or, was there ever ſuch Madneſs as that of ſaying, to morrow is a new day, we will then begin to caſt off our Sin, and apply our ſelves to an ingenuous Repentance? For, do's not dayly Experience make out that ſome Body or other are dying dayly? Do we not frequently hear of ſome ſurpriz'd and carried off by an Apoplexy, which renders them alive and dead in a moment? Others ſnatch'd away in a Hot

Burning Fever, and die not themſelves? Have not many their Souls let out by an Accident? Hiſtory tells us, that the Senator *Fabius* was choak'd with a Hair. *Anacreon* with the Kernel of a Raiſin; and that a Fiſh-bone coſt *Tarquinius Priſcus* his Life; Poor *Eſchylus*, the Tragedian, ſitting in an open Place bare-headed, by chance an Eagle flew over him carrying a Tortoiſe in her Talons, and taking his bald-pate to be a Stone, let it fall in order to break it, but it fell with ſuch a violence that it gave him a Mortal Wound. 'Tis *God*'s advice, by the Prophet *Iſay*, *Ceaſe ye from man, whoſe Breath is in his Noſtrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Let the many Diſeaſes and Diſtempers we are ſubject to, and thoſe various Caſualties to which we are liable, put us upon making Preparation for Death and Judgement. Die we muſt all, but when, where, how; or, in what Eſtate, Circumſtance, or Condition, all this is uncertain? Which brings me,

Pliny. *Val. Max.* Cap. 2.

2*ly*, To conſider the Frailty of our Lives, and in the Conſideration hereof ſhew that the uncertainty of our Lives ought to caution us how we *boaſt* our ſelves of to morrow, or preſume upon long Life, and ſeeing many Days.

Such a ſlippery and uncertain thing is this our preſent Being, that we no ſooner begin to live but Death ſends a proceſs out againſt us, inſomuch that the wiſeſt among the Ancients have been at a ſtand, whether they ſhould call the time of our ſojourning here on Earth, a *living Death*, or a *dying Life*. How vain is it to pretend to diſpoſe of the Future? To enter upon Projects upon a Preſumption we ſhall live to ſee the final Accompliſhment of them? To *boaſt* and ſay, well, I will go and pull down my Barns, and build greater, ſettle my Affairs and then retire? The Wit of Man is not able to expreſs

expreſs the blindneſs of humane Imprudence in ſuch a Preſumption. We are all born to die; all of us equally frail, and uncertain of to morrow: why then ſhould we dare to preſume upon living to ſee it? St. *James* has not a little cautioned us gainſt all ſuch Vauntings, Boaſtings, or the like arrogant Forms of Speech. *Go too, now ye that ſay, to day or to morrow we will go into ſuch a City and continue there a year, and buy and ſell and get gain: Whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow, for what is your Life? It is even a Vapour that apppeareth for a little time and then vaniſheth away.* This was the Apoſtle's Caution to thoſe who boaſted, they would go into ſuch a City and continue there for ſome time, aſſuming to themſelves Power over the Future: this he blamed them for, and told them their Duty. *For ye ought to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall live and do this or that.* And ſure I am, this was St. *Paul*'s Practice alſo: For ſpeaking of ſome who were puffed up as tho he would not come back again where he had before been propagating the Goſpel, took occaſion to deſpiſe him when abſent. *But I will come to you ſhortly if the Lord will.* St. *Paul* makes mention of his going back, but it was with Subordination to the Will of God; and ſo likewiſe our Forms of Language ought to be. For it is a moſt Atheiſtical way of ſpeaking, to ſuffer the Tongue to utter ſuch inſolent Language as this, I will do this or that, I will take ſuch or ſuch a Journey, I will return at my Pleaſure. And I will diſpoſe of my ſelf for the future, as ſhall ſeem moſt agreeable to me. What can ſuch Forms of Speech tend to but the taking our ſelves off from all Dependance on God? To place our ſelves upon the Throne of Heaven, and arrogate to frail Mortality, what only is the Prerogative of Almightineſs it ſelf? For God only can diſpoſe of the Future.

Chap. 4. 13, 14.

Chap. 4. 19.

He

He knows what ſhall be on the Morrow, and what a Day will bring forth. Much may be ſaid againſt ſo vain, dangerous and profane a Preſumption as long Life. Are we not all Men? Are not all our Bodies ſubject to Infirmities and Diſeaſes? Are we not all compoſed of Fleſh and Blood, the true and certain Signs and Characters of Mortality? When *Anaxagoras* received the unhappy News of his only Son's untimely Death, there was not the leaſt Diſorder in his Mind, neither were his Thoughts in the leaſt diſcompoſed: For when the Meſſenger told him his only Son was dead, he with a compoſed Mind returned him this Anſwer, *I knew I begot him a mortal Man.* And *Alexander* the Great, having received ſome Wounds was convinced that he was a mortal Man, by the bloud that ran out of them. *Adam* was formed of the Duſt of the Ground, and was reſolved into the ſame; and when our Breath goeth forth we ſhall return to the Duſt likewiſe. It was an admirable ſaying of St. *Auſtin*, *Let a Man own himſelf to be a Mortal, and boaſting of to morrow will and muſt down.* What *Philip*, King of *Macedon*'s Page ſaid to him, may as truly be ſaid of every Man here preſent: *Remember thou art a mortal man.* Remember thou muſt die, and that, even this Night, thy Soul may take its Flight and leave thee nothing but a breathleſs Body, is enough to humble the lofty mind of the greateſt *Boaſter*. *Solomon*, to perſwade Men not to defer Acts of Charity and Mercy, lays down this Rule: *Say not unto thy Neighbour, go, and come again, and to morrow I will give unto you.* He would not that Acts of Mercy ſhould be deferred till to morrow, but Men ſhould do good, even when it is in their Power. And if Acts of Mercy ought not to be put off till to morrow if it be in our Power to do them to day: Surely then, we will not be ſo cruel

to

to our own Souls, as to deferr being merciful to them till to morrow when we may do it to day, and when to day may be much ſafer, becauſe we know not what a day may bring forth. I come,

3*ly*, To ſhew that a Preſumption of living long, or a boaſting of to morrow, may juſtly provoke God to blaſt ſuch a Preſumption with a ſudden Diſappointment. What is it to promiſe to our ſelves long Life, but to promiſe alſo that God will wait our leiſure, that he will not interrupt us in the Enjoyment of our Goods and Poſſeſſions, but we may live as we liſt and die when we pleaſe? What is it to boaſt of to morrow, and when to morrow comes, to ſay, well, to morrow I will change my Life, and to ſay every day? VVhat's this but to flatter our ſelves that the Mighty and Powerful Creator will dance Attendance after us through all the tedious Stages of our unreaſonable Delays? That he will wink at all thoſe Affronts and Provocations which between our Youth and Old Age we were reſolved to offer him? And in the Cloſe of all, when we have wearied our ſelves in the ways of wickedneſs, when our Strength fails, our Spirits ſpent, our Bones full of the Sins of our Youth, our *B*odies withered, and our Souls wearied with reſtleſs Motions of unſatisfied Deſires that the Almighty will be ſo tame as then to be fully ſatisfied with a groaning *O*, or *A*, ſighing *Alas*, and readily pardon all our Sins upon a bare Acknowledgment of th m? Be not deceived, God will not be mocked; ſuch a Preſumption provoked God to cutthe rich Man off in the Goſpel, with a *thou Fool, this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee.* A Warning to all Men how they boaſt themſelves of to morrow, and preſume upon living to eat the Fat and drink the Sweet. We read of a People, in the 6th of *Amos*, that put far from

from them the evil day, who *laid upon beds of Ivory, and ſtretched themſelves upon their Couches; that eat the lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the midſt of the ſtall; that chanted to the ſound of the Viol, and invented themſelves Inſtruments of muſick, and drank wine in bowls, and anointed themſelves with the chief ointments.* Thus truſting in their Enjoyment, and feeding their Fancies with many Years to come, in the midſt of their Jollity, the Wrath of the Lord brake in upon them, even almoſt to an utter Deſtruction. O Man! glory not in thy Poſſeſſions. Say not to thy Soul, *Eat, drink, and be merry, thou haſt goods laid up for many years*, leſt thou be cut off by a ſudden and unexpected Stroak, which will confute thee of all the vain Promiſes made to thy ſelf. Thus, whilſt that proud King *Belſhazar* was quaffing and carouſing himſelf in the midſt of his ſumptuous Feaſt, in the Company of his Lords and the noble Train of his Wives and Concubines. In the height of all his Royal Pleaſures, a Hand came out of the Wall upon which his Doom was written and deſcribed, which he no ſooner ſaw, but *his Countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, ſo that the joints of his loins were looſed, and his Knees ſmote one againſt another.* All his Royal Pleaſures could not compoſe him. Nay, not the Wine he drank was able to keep horrour and Aſtoniſhment from him. Sorrow ſeized the Man, and diſpell'd all the jolly Company of Mirth and Delight.

Thus having diſpatched the Particulars raiſed from the Text, And,

1. Shewen the Folly and Danger of Mens promiſing to themſelves long Life.

2. Conſidered the Frailty of our Lives and in the Conſideration thereof let you ſee that the Uncertainty of our Lives ſhould make us humble in the midſt of Plenty and Proſperity.

3. That

3. That the Preſumption of having many years yet to come, may juſtly provoke God to blaſt ſuch a Preſumption with a ſudden Diſappointment. I come,

Laſtly, to draw two Inferences from the whole, and ſo conclude. And,

1. VVhat ſhould the uncertainty of our Lives teach us, but the Art of Divine Arithmetick, ſo to *number our days as to apply our hearts unto Wiſdom.* *All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my Change comes,* ſaid Holy *Job.* *Ante Senectutem curavi ut bene viverem, in Senectute ut bene moriar,* ſaid *Seneca.* I took care to live well before I was old; and now, being old, my whole Buſineſs is to ſtudy how I ſhall die well. A moſt noble Saying, and fit to have dropt from the Mouth of a Chriſtian. VVhat Man that conſiders the Uncertainty of his Life but will live in a continued Preparation for Death? *Paſs the time of your Sojourning here in fear.* VVork out your Salvation whilſt 'tis day with you, leſt the Night overtake you unawares, and render ye incapable of doing any good for your Souls, for *there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave.* Death is a ſilent ſtate. There will be no Repenting there. Repentance muſt be done in this Life, or it can never be done. VVe muſt make our Peace with *God* before we go hence, for *in the Grave there is no Remembrance* of him. *When once the Maſter of the Houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he ſhall anſwer and ſay unto you, I know ye not whence you are, depart from me, all ye Workers of Iniquity.* After this diſmal and doleful Sentence there remains nothing but *weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.* There will be no *Moſes to ſtand in the Gap for them. No* Aaron *to ſtep between the Living and the Dead. Nor any* Noah, Daniel, *or* Job *to Pity or Pray for them.* If we

Chap. 14.

Epiſt. 62.

1 Pet. 1. 17.

Eccles. 9. 10.

go down to the Grave in our Sins, in that miſerable Condition, the Soul goes to God, and ſo to Judgment. Death ſets Men down in an Eternity, and that either of Happineſs or Miſery. The one of theſe two ſtates receives the Souls of all Men. A Life of Bliſs and Happineſs is prepar'd for Good-Men, wherein they are to ſpend a whole Eternity; but the bad are caſt into Regions of Darkneſs, for ever to lie under the VVrath and Anger of an incenſed Deity. Surely it highly concerns us all to ſet all things right betwixt God and our Souls, leſt we be ſnatch'd away on a ſuddain, and be irreverſibly determin'd and abſolutely fix'd under an unchangable State. But,

2. A ſecond Inference is this. If there be Folly and Danger in preſuming upon Long-Life, and if ſuch a Preſumption may juſtly provoke *God* to blaſt it with a ſuddain Diſapointment, what remains, but that we enjoy the things of this World as if we enjoy'd them not? For what is there in this World that we ſhould ſo dote upon it, and ſolace our ſelves in the Enjoyment of it's good things? Is it not a World of Miſery? A World of Sorrow? A World where Sin and Iniquity abounds? A World beſet with Temptations and Diſapointments? A World full of Snares and Croſſes? And has it not been in a manner a Field of Blood? Have we not heard of dayly Slaughters? Is not War the great thing that has long ſounded in our Ears? The Neighing of Horſes, the Roaring of Cannon, the Burning of Towns and Cities, and laying them in Aſhes: The Sinking of Ships, and ſending Men alive down into the Deep to make their Grave in the VVaters. Have not theſe, and ſuch like Calamities dayly reach'd our Ears? Beſides, does not *the Devil go about like a roaring* Lyon *ſeeking which of us he can devour?* Do we not here meet with falſe Friends?

Do

Do we not often run into dangers, and in the midſt of Life are in Death? Why then ſhould we be fond of Long-life, and have ſo paſſionate a Deſire to take up our Dwelling with delight on this ſide the Grave, ſeeing the longer our Lives are, the longer will be our Accounts, and the more numerous our Years are, the more numerous will our ſins be? When *Conſtantine* the Great, felt the approaches of Death, he ſet all things ready to embrace it. But thoſe that were about him hearing him ſpeak of Death, did endeavour to divert his Mind from that thought, ſaying, *He was become too uſeful for the World to go out of it.* To which the Good Emperour reply'd, *Of what do you ſpeak to me, as if it was not true Life to die to the World to live with my Saviour? No, this here is not a Death but a Paſſage to Immortality. If ye love me hinder not my way, one cannot go too ſoon to God.* Could we talk a little time with a bleſſed Soul now in Heaven, and diſcourſe of the ſtate of the other World, we ſhould think it long till we came to the enjoyment of it, and in an holy tranſport would be ready to cry out, *Oh that I the Wings of a Dove, thither would I fly, and take up my reſt for ever.* Fix thy Thoughts then, O my Soul, upon a better World, a World above, where true Joys are to be found, where there are no Sorrows, no Troubles, no Dangers, no Fears, no Wars, no Confuſions, and no Uproars to be met with, but where all is Peace, Delight, and perfect Pleaſure, and where all is Heaven and Heavenly. Diſpoſe of thy ſelf, O my Soul, for this Life. Here place all thy Happineſs, and take off thy Thoughts from things temporal, and caſt them upon thoſe that are Eternal. A little time will eat us out of theſe poor Cottages in which we now inhabit. It cannot be long ere every Soul here preſent muſt appear before the Judgment Seat of *Chriſt*, to give an Account of every thing

done in the Body. For the ſake of your own Souls let me beſeech you to improve this little, this ſhort, and this uncertain time of yours to the beſt Advantage ye are able. *Bleſſed will that Servant be whom when his Lord*
2 Cor. 5. 1. *ſhall come ſhall find ſo doing. For when the Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolv'd, they have a Building with God, an Houſe not made with Hands eternal in the Heavens.*

To conclude, let what I have ſaid upon this ſubject prevail upon you to make this ſhort Life a Preparation to an endleſs ſtate of Glory. *Boaſt not of to morrow.* Put not the Evil day far from you, leſt when ye *cry Peace and Safety ſuddain Deſtruction come upon you.* There is a difference between the deſtruction of a Man and other Creatures. They when they die ceaſe to be. All their being expires with their Breath, but man conſiſting of a double Nature, his Death is but a Diſſolution, A Tranſlation of his Soul either into *Abraham's* Boſom there to enjoy infinite and boundleſs Bliſs; or elſe to thoſe infernal Regions of Darkneſs where the Spirits of Wicked Men ſpend a miſerable Immortality. Let wicked Men pride themſelves in their happineſs, yet the time will come when Deſtruction will overtake them. Tares among Wheat may grow up unto the Harveſt. Pleaſant Rivers may glide a long way. A heap of Snow may continue for a long time: But the Sun will ariſe when the Snow ſhall be melted. The Harveſt will come when the Tares ſhall be ſeparated from the Wheat, and all the Jollity of the Wicked, like thoſe pleaſant Rivers of *Judea*, ſhall at laſt fall into a Dead Sea. There is a Generation of Men that whilſt the Sun ſhines think it will never be Night. While their Bellies are full never think of Hunger. Like *Empedocles* that would not believe the Fire burnt till he put his Finger in and try'd. Or, like *Thomas* that would not believe that *Chriſt* was riſen

riſen from the Dead, unleſs with his Finger he felt the Print of his Nails, and thruſt his Hand into his ſide. While the Bridegroom tarried the Virgins all ſlumbered and ſlept. This is the fault of our Age, and I pray *God* many be not ſurpriz'd as they were. Their Slumbering and Sleeping was the cauſe why they could not be admitted into the Marriage-Chamber, why the door was ſhut againſt 'em, and of our Lords anſwering their cry from within with a *Verily, I ſay unto you I know you not.* And can we think to eſcape the ſame Judgement if we cry to *morrow*, to *morrow*, and boaſt of Futurity? We may aſſure our ſelves if we do, the day of Death will ſurprize us, and then it will be too late to make Peace for our Sins when the Soul is brought to its Tryal, to give an Account for what it did in the Body. And,

Firſt, Let me caution the Young-man againſt boaſting himſelf of to morrow. We are all upon our Journey to the Grave, and how ſoon the youngeſt of us may arrive there God only knows. The *Jews* have a Proverb, which they expreſs in theſe Words, *Many old Camels carry the Skins of young Ones to the Market. Nulli cedo.* I yield to none, is Deaths Motto. The life of a Young-Man is as much a *Vapour* as theOld-Man's is. They ſhall lie down alike in the Duſt, and the Worms ſhall cover them.

Secondly, Let the Old-Man likewiſe, who already has one foot in the Grave, and whoſe weak and infirm Body ſtoops towards the Earth, be cautious how he boaſts of to *Morrow*. Let Old age that has furrowed his Face, wrinkled his Skin, pal'd his Viſage, drawn in his Eyes, fumbled his Speech, ſharpned his Noſe, weakned his Memory, ſhatter'd his Underſtanding, [illegible]led his Reaſon, deafn'd his Ears, ſhortned his Breath, decay'd his

his Appetite, caus'd his Knees to quiver, and his Joints to tremble, ſtrengthen his Faith, and put him in mind of his decrepit and dying Condition. Let the Infirmity and Diſeaſes, which have ſeized upon his aged Body, call to his Remembrance that his latter end is approaching, that the time of his Departure draws near, and that his Life holds but by a weak ſtring, and therefore it becomes him not to boaſt, but to improve that little to the beſt Advantage he is able, that ſo he may depart in Peace. and die in the Favour of his God. Alas! it's grown too general a Cuſtome, both among Young and Old, to put the Evil Day far from them, and not to ſend for the Miniſter to prepare them for the Life to come, till they deſpair of living any longer in this, which occaſion'd a witty Man to make this Obſervation, *Ubi deſinit Medicus, incipit Theologus.* When the Phyſitian has made an end, then the Divine begins. Sure I am the ſafeſt way is to improve the time of Health, and not to tarry till your Souls are ready to take their Flight and breath out themſelves into Eternity. *Men and Brethren what ſhall we do*, ſaid St. *Peter*'s Converts: This was the courſe they took in the time of Strength, and Vigour, Health, and Life.

And here, was I to make a long Panegyrick of our departed Siſter (whoſe Funeral we now ſolemnize) I could with eaſe launch forth, and yet uſe no Pulpit Flattery, but the true end of a Funeral Sermon ſhould be not ſo much to commend the Dead, as by it to inſtruct the Living, and make the Survivours ſenſible that they ſhall all one Day be, as ſhe now is who lies breathleſs before us.

I ſhall contrive what I have to ſay in a very narrow Compaſs: And,

I. *In relation to her Husband*, ſhe approved her ſelf a Careful, Loving, and Dutiful Wife.

II. *In relation to her Children*, a Tender, Affectionate and Indulgent Mother.

III. *In relation to thoſe among whom ſhe lived*, a Good Friendly, and Kind Neighbour.

IV. *In relation to her Servants*, a Juſt, Bountiful, and Exemplary Miſtriſs.

V. *In relation to her Kindred*, She was Generous and Hoſpitable.

VI. *In relation to the Poor*, full of Pity, Compaſſion, and Charity.

VII. *In relation to her Superiors*, of a Modeſt, Decent, and Becoming Behaviour.

VIII. *In relation to all*, Courteous, Obliging, and Affable.

IX. *In relation to God, in time of Health*, a conſtant Reader of his holy Word, a ſtrict performer of the great Duty of *Prayer*, a frequenter of the Holy-Sacrament, a *Peace-Maker*, and one who follow'd ſuch things as made for Peace.

And, in her Sickneſs, ſhe was a Pattern of Meekneſs, and Submiſſion; for, in the midſt of her ſharpeſt Agonies, in her ſoreſt Pains, ſhe reſign'd up her Will to the Will of God; and, with great Chearfulneſs look'd Death in the Face, and was heartily reconcil'd to it. She dyed in perfect Charity with all the World, and now reſts from all her Labours. Thus, in all the Relations of a Wife, a Mother, a Neighbour, a Miſtriſs, a Friend, and a Chriſtian, ſhe acquitted her ſelf with great Wiſdom, Prudence, and Piety.

And now the Soul being gone to *God who gave it*, what remains but that we take our laſt Farewell of her Body, and commit it to the Grave there to *Reſt* till the General Reſurrection when the Trumpet ſhall ſound the Call, *Ariſe, ye Dead, and come to Judgment.* All that are in their Graves ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of Man, and ſhall come forth, they that have done Good unto the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil unto the Reſurrection of Condemnation. The Grave ſhall not always hide us, nor the Duſt for ever conceal us. Riſe we muſt all, and in theſe Bodies ſtand forth and receive an unalterable Sentence. Let me beſeech all of you, to prepare for Death and Judgement, that ſo in the great Morning of the Reſurrection, we may be of the number of thoſe who ſhall riſe to Everlaſting Life.

To Die well is a great Buſineſs, a great Concern, and if we underſtand our ſelves we cannot but know it; for, at our Death we throw our laſt Caſt for an Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery: And how much we are concern'd to throw that well upon which ſo vaſt a ſtake depends,

depends, do ye judge. We Die but once, and if we do not do it well, we are loſt for ever. O that all of us may ſo Live and ſo Die, that ſo we may be able to ſay, with St. *Paul*, *Whether we live, we live to the Lord, whether we die, we die to the Lord, whether we live or die we are the Lords. For me to die is Gain*, ſaid the ſame Apoſtle, ſo will it be ours, if we prepare for it by a Virtuous and Righteous Life.

Bleſſed is that Servant whom when his Lord ſhall come ſhall find ſo doing. Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his Holy Place? Even he that hath clean Hands and a pure Heart. And now, Lord, *what is our Hope, truly our Hope is even in thee*: Lord, *teach us ſo to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdome.*

May God, of his Infinite Mercy, grant, that all of us not Boaſting of to Morrow, may take care to provide and prepare for Death to day; and that the Frailty and Uncertainty of our Lives may call to our dayly Remembrance the neceſſary Duty of Repentance, to the Reformation of our Sins, the Improvement of our Vertues, and to the eternal Peace, Welfare and Happineſs of our Souls.

And *I beſeech God to ſanctify you all, and to preſerve your whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* To whom be Honour and Glory from this time, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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